



## City of Madison News Release

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**For Immediate Release:**

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**For More Information Contact:**

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(608) 243-0302

**Informational Website Link:**

[www.publichealthmdc.com/disease/stiHIV/](http://www.publichealthmdc.com/disease/stiHIV/), [www.cdc.gov/std/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/default.htm)

**Dane County's Sexually Transmitted Disease Challenge**

*Prevention First - Then Get Yourself Tested*

Sara Mader is one of the people with the job of talking to people with sexually transmitted diseases or STDs. Sara is a nurse with Public Health-Madison and Dane County (PHMDC). She says that "people are often surprised when I tell them that about half of sexually active people will get an STD by the age of 25 and that at least half of people diagnosed with chlamydia will not experience any symptoms."

STDs include such diseases as chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea and HIV/AIDS. Dane County, along with the rest of the country is facing a significant challenge related to STDs. In 2012, there were 1,891 cases of chlamydia reported to PHMDC, and 506 cases just through March of this year. During last year we also had 252 cases of gonorrhea and 36 reported cases of syphilis.

The challenge is particularly relevant to sexually active young people. Sara Mader advises her clients 25 years and younger who are having sex that they "should be screened for sexually transmitted infections at least once each year." She also counsels that "If you're having sex with more than one partner or have a new sex partner and are over 25, you should also be screened annually. In fact even pregnant women are screened during pregnancy as a routine part of their prenatal care to help protect their babies."

If left undiagnosed and untreated, these diseases can pose serious health threats to those infected. Untreated chlamydia can lead to infertility and serious and often painful disorders and diseases of the reproductive system.

On a national scale, the problem is even more dramatic. According to new estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are about 20 million new sexually transmitted infections in the United States each year, costing the American healthcare system nearly \$16 billion in direct medical costs alone.

The first practical line of defense is the proper and consistent use of condoms. Remember that while condoms also provide birth control, other methods of birth control will not offer protection against STDs. Abstinence and avoiding multiple partners are other options to help prevent infection.

We are fortunate to have a number of options for testing and treatment:

- Public Health-Madison and Dane County offers STD Clinics that are free to all teens, and to Dane County adults without health insurance or with Medical Assistance (See link below). People can get information about STDs and the STD Clinic by calling (608) 243-0411.
- During the month of April, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin will offer free STD testing at all family planning clinics statewide.
- For UW students, the University Health Services offer the Sexual Health Clinic. Call (608) 265-5600 for more information and an appointment.
- Your regular health care provider

April is National Sexually Transmitted Disease Awareness Month, which means that it is a particularly good time to shed more light on these challenging sexual health issues.

For more information about local clinics:

PHMDC, information and clinics

[www.publichealthmdc.com/disease/stiHIV/](http://www.publichealthmdc.com/disease/stiHIV/)

Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin

[www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/stds-hiv-safer-sex-101.htm](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/stds-hiv-safer-sex-101.htm)

UW Sexual Health Clinic

[www.uhs.wisc.edu](http://www.uhs.wisc.edu)

For frank STD information and advice to young audiences:

[www.itsyoursexlife.com/gyt/top-10-most-outrageous-sex-myths/](http://www.itsyoursexlife.com/gyt/top-10-most-outrageous-sex-myths/)

[www.itsyoursexlife.com/](http://www.itsyoursexlife.com/)

For a complete detailed overview of STDs

[www.cdc.gov/std/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/default.htm)

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Public Health - Madison & Dane County

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